



**Australasian Parliamentary Educators' Conference  
Hobart, November 2019  
Victorian Parliament Report**

***Tours and Customer Service Unit***

The Tours and Customer Service Unit (TCSU) is a part of the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office in the Legislative Assembly. The TCSU offers a broad range of community engagement and educational experiences for members of the public and school students from primary, secondary, tertiary and adult education institutions. Tours and presentations are conducted and facilitated by Legislative Assembly Tour Guides.

***Booked Tours***

Primary and secondary schools, tertiary institutions, English as an Additional Language (EAL) classes, community groups, Probus clubs, government departments, delegations and other groups take advantage of the free private group tours offered to groups of six or more who book in advance. We offer seven available time slots for group tours each day on non-sitting weeks, 10 on sitting Tuesdays and eight on the Wednesday and Thursday of a sitting week. The content of a booked group tour will vary according to the needs of the group, but will include information about the history of our Parliament, the democratic process and how a law is made. Guests will have a chance to see Queen's Hall, the library and our two chambers. During the 2018–19 year our senior tour guides conducted booked tours for 31,701 students and 4,054 adults. Each group is asked to fill in a survey after their visit and the results show that our booked tours continue to exceed the expectations of participants. Tours that incorporate question time can also be booked. In total, 796 students attended a question time tour this year.

**Parliament Role Plays**

Parliament Role Plays (PRPs) are one of the most popular community engagement programs on offer. Demand for the program is high, and role plays are often fully booked for the year within a few months of bookings becoming available. Role play sessions are held each non-sitting weekday and are open to students in years 5-7. The role play takes place inside the Legislative Assembly Chamber. **7743 Students** attended Primary Roleplays in the 2018/19 period and **1335 VCE Students**

**Metropolitan School Visits**

Due to the popularity of our role plays and the wide range of considerations for teachers planning excursions, it is not always possible for school groups to arrange a visit to Parliament. On days when Parliament is not sitting we visit the schools instead so they can still take part in one of our role plays. Two senior tour guides go to a school in the Melbourne metropolitan area to visit year 5 and 6 or VCE Legal Studies students and engage them in our 90-minute program. **This year, 1,761 students took part in a role play during our 61 visits to schools.**

## **Regional Visits**

Six regional visits were conducted by the outreach team in 2018–19. The aim of the regional visits program is to take our community engagement and education programs to regional Victoria and give students outside metropolitan Melbourne an opportunity to participate in role plays. Local members of Parliament are invited to come along and talk to the students on the day. Parliament tour guides travel to regional towns for two to four days and provide parliamentary role plays for local school students in years 5 and 6. Our VCE role play is also offered to Year 11 and 12 students on these visits. During the reporting period, our team conducted presentations in Hamilton, Lakes Entrance, Warragul, Rosebud, Colac and Mildura. Overall, 64 groups and a total of 1,407 students participated. The feedback we have received from the teachers and students has been extremely positive. In a number of regions, the schools wishing to attend exceeded the available sessions, demonstrating the continued popularity of the program.

## ***Community Engagement and Education Unit***

The Community Engagement and Education Unit develops and implements programs and resources that link parliament with the community and help to establish its place in school curricula and adult education.

## **Unit news**

The Unit is involved in running the seminar program for first year law students from Victoria University, whereby students spend half a day at parliament hearing from our Clerks and Committee executive officers about the legislative process.

After developing a prototype digital learning module on the eight-hour day in 2017, two more modules are currently in production on medically supervised injecting centres and on Aboriginal contributions, which is being developed in conjunction with Worawa Aboriginal College.

The Parliament Prize Competition continued this year and was open to primary and secondary students in three age categories. The format was a 90-second video and students were asked to give a Member's statement. Over 500 entries were received, which is many times more than previous years, indicating that the format and the topic appealed to students and teachers.

Our parliamentary education advisory panel continues to provide advice and guidance on the future direction of education at the Parliament of Victoria.

During 2018 a contractor was engaged to deliver PD to teachers across Victoria. Videos were also produced of the PD sessions for teachers to access online. This program is currently in review and will continue in some form in 2020.

The *Springboard* quarterly education newsletter continues to be a good way to engage with teachers, and now has over 2,000 subscribers.

We continued our partnerships with teacher professional associations across the education sector, including those supporting business studies, civics and citizenship, history, literacy, adult education and the EAL community. Attendance at a range of expos and conferences helped to raise the parliament's profile and publicise its resources and programs.

Other initiatives include:

- Professional development for pre- and in-service teachers at Parliament House, as part of the *Civics and Citizenship Network*, as well as participation in a PD day to inform teachers what's available for them when they plan their City Experience excursions for Year 9 students.
- Working with the Department of Education and Training (DET) in the provision of the Victorian Schools' Parliamentary Program, which comprises the annual primary and secondary schools' conventions.

We will continue our focus on supporting the parliament's Community Engagement Strategy. A particular area of focus will be expanding the coverage of our current and new resources to those sections of the community that need further support and that are challenging to reach. This effort will be reflected in our marketing strategy.